

Be Energy Smart

As a consumer, you can take simple and inexpensive measures to lower your cooling costs.

- If possible, set the thermostat to a higher temperature and dress for warmer indoor temperatures. Avoid high temperatures in homes with infants or with ill or elderly persons.
- Don't set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster.
- Make sure the air-conditioning unit is the proper size. A unit that is too big will perform less efficiently.
- Clean or replace filters and condenser coils often on air-conditioning units.
- Use an interior fan with your window air conditioner to help spread cooled air more effectively.
- Don't place lamps or TV sets near the air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from nearby appliances.
- Avoid blocking cooling registers with furniture, draperies, or carpet.
- Seal leaks around doors, windows, and other openings (such as pipes or ducts), with caulking or weather-stripping.
- Keep blinds or curtains closed during the day to block excess sunlight.
- Install whole-house fans that pull cool air through the house.
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.

More tips can be found on the US Department of Energy's website at www.DOE.GOV. Also, visit the ORS website at ORS.SC.GOV.

ABOUT THE ORS

The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) represents consumers of investor-owned utilities in South Carolina before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC). The PSC is the state agency that sets utilities' rates. The ORS must look at the impact to the consumer and utilities' continued investment in reliable and high-quality services.

ORS Consumer Services Can Help

If you've spoken with your utility and still need help, ORS Consumer Services can contact the company on your behalf. The ORS can check to see whether the utility has followed all applicable regulations. Staff can also direct you to social services agencies that may have available funds to assist with your utility bills.



8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Monday - Friday (closed state holidays)

Messages can be left on 24-hour ORS Consumer Services hotline.



(803) 737-5230 (Columbia, SC)

(800) 922-1531 (toll-free in SC)



Managing Summer Cooling Costs

Be Energy Safe

Practice these safety measures year-round:

- Don't overload an outlet with too many appliances.
- Keep electric appliances away from water sources.
- Replace damaged electric cords.
- Make sure that electric plugs fit securely into outlets.

Summer can bring extreme weather, such as hurricanes. It's important to be prepared for possible power outages.

- Have an emergency plan.
- Have a disaster supply kit that includes water, non-perishable food, and emergency supplies. Supplies should be enough for at least three days.
- Use battery-powered flashlights and lanterns instead of candles, gas lanterns, or torches (which can cause a fire).

While raising the temperature in your home can save money, temperatures that are too high can be dangerous to your health.

- Fans won't prevent heat-related illness once indoor temperatures reach the high 90s.
- If your home doesn't have air-conditioning, cool down at a public place for a few hours or take a cool shower.
- Contact your local health department to see if there are heat-relief shelters in your area.



Assistance Agencies

Consumers may find they need help meeting their energy needs. Some utilities support programs in local energy offices throughout the state to help consumers. The agencies listed below can help you apply for assistance.

Call 2-1-1 any time — 24 hours a day, 365 days a year — to connect to vital services in your community. This service is free and multilingual. 2-1-1 is for finding community health and human services resources.

Aiken/Barnwell Counties Community Action Commission, Inc.

Aiken, Barnwell, and Lexington Counties
(803) 648-6836

Beaufort/Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission, Inc.

Beaufort and Jasper Counties
(843) 470-4508

Carolina Community Actions, Inc.

Chester, Fairfield, Lancaster, Union, and York Counties
(803) 329-5195

Charleston Co. Human Services Commission

Charleston County
(843) 723-9285

Chesterfield-Marlboro Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.

Chesterfield and Marlboro Counties
(843) 320-9760

Darlington County Community Action Agency

Darlington County
(843) 332-1135

GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, Inc.

Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda Counties
(864) 223-8434

Lowcountry Community Action Agency, Inc.

Colleton and Hampton Counties
(843) 549-5576

O-C-A-B Community Action Agency, Inc.

Orangeburg, Calhoun, Allendale, and Bamberg Counties
(803) 536-1027

Pee Dee Community Action Agency

Dillon, Florence, and Marion Counties
(843) 678-3400

Piedmont Community Actions, Inc.

Cherokee and Spartanburg Counties
(864) 327-4546

Sunbelt Human Advancement Resources, Inc. (SHARE)

Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens Counties
(864) 269-0700

Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.

Horry, Georgetown, and Williamsburg Counties
(843) 234-4100

Wateree Community Actions, Inc.

Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Richland, and Sumter Counties
(803) 775-4354

American Red Cross - Central South Carolina

(803) 540-1200

